

Closed Caption Log, Council Work Session - Urban Rail, 05/29/12

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>> good morning.

I'm austin mayor lee leffingwell, I don't think it's on yet, but -- a quorum is present, so I'm going to call this austin city council work session to order on tuesday, 29th, 2012.

we're meeting in the boards and commissions room, austin city hall, 301 west second street, austin, texas.

With that we have one item on the agenda, it's a briefing update on urban rail, I'll turn it over to -
- to mr. good.

>> Mayor, council, appreciate this opportunity to continue our conversation, we begin next week, robert good, assistant city manager, rob spiller austin transport department.

Rob is going to walk you through, as we mentioned, walk you through the alignment, phasing, how we came to this conclusion and this recommendation that will be before you today.

One thing that I wanted to do is a real brief introduction is remind you this is part of the transit working group, the preferred system that we've been working through with that regional body that -- that subcommittee of campo.

And what -- what your city staff has done is taken that preferred system and the phasing that came out of that, and developed what we think is a city of austin, we have now put on our city of austin hat said what, if you all want to consider funding some capital in this high capacity transit system, what would we recommend that piece would be.

So it is a regional aspect, but it is also we put on our city of austin perspective and to recommend what we think this body would do if you choose to move forward.

With that I'm going to turn it over to rob spiller, he's going to walk you through the alignment and phasing that we have come up with at this point.

>> Very good, thank you.

I would like to start by -- on the same slide that mr.

Good started on last time, reminding you of the issues that we're trying to deal with.

And really it has to do with more than just mobility, but mobility is certainly the -- the lack of mobility is the contributing factor that goes to the heart of the issue and that's preserving the continued vitality and economic health of our region.

What I would like to do and the reason that I'm starting on the issue again is to delve into that just a little bit more, talk about what's driving that.

As you all know, we have a hot economy, forbes listed us as the second consecutive year in a row as one of the fastest growing economies in the nation.

Clearly more companies coming to austin than are leaving as part of normal business, so we have a very hot economic environment.

This is straight out of forbes magazine.

We also know that we have considerable growth going on in downtown.

This is a slide that we've been using for some time and these -- these buildings are clearly coming out of the ground now as we look around downtown and see the building cranes all around downtown.

That new development generates new employment, it generates new residential densities downtown, which all adds up to people coming and going from central austin and the question is how do we serve those people.

When we think about central austin and specifically the downtown capitol complex and the university of texas area and compare it against other cities in terms of their central employment within the region, what we see is austin ranks very highly amongst our peers, only places like new york and new orleans and washington d.c.

Have a higher central employment concentration as compared to their regional employment than does austin.

And what's unique here is remember that when these statistics are put together, students are not counted as employed.

They are a different class of traveler in terms of the central area.

And so on top of this employment, we add something like 50,000 students at the university of texas.

, i believe, maybe new york, have downtown universities of similar demand, similar number of students, that would put them in comparison to us.

We have a very high concentration of demand for access to that central core.

Compounding this is we have a system of roadways, arterials, call them legacy arterials that are very congested.

You have heard me talk about all of our major arteries into the city are at capacity, all of those arteries have to go through gateway intersections, those orange dots on this map here that are all full during the peak periods.

In addition, we know by simply driving in this morning when there's something exciting going on like a primary election, that mopac is very busy and i-35 is very busy.

So after a holiday weekend.

So our major arteries, our major transportation systems feeding this central area are literally full.

When we think about what we can do to improve those roadways, we know that we can barely get to the bottom of that pipeline development.

We can barely supply the demand or the capacity needed to meet that pipeline development, which means there's no capacity left for future growth as it comes on daily in terms of new development announcements in central austin.

That should be a concern to all of us.

We also know that many of our corridors are very constrained.

I'm going to use i-35, straight from the regional connect project.

These red polygons along i-35 represent some of the very significant constraints along that corridor, which prevent us from going in like other cities whether they be san antonio, houston or dallas and dramatically enlarging our roadway system.

We have an historic corridor lined by major assets, whether they be the brackenridge hospital on the east side or the university of texas fields, dkr memorial stadium on the east side or literally our texas heros that are interred on the west side or vice versa, I got this wrong, sorry, i should know that.

But literally the highways constrained.

There is no widening it.

Decking that again seems to be out of the imagination for many residents within austin as well.

So what are we doing about that as a city?

Well, we actually have a strategic approach that i think is very strong and it is one that we can easily communicate to others.

First of all, we are making investments with your help on routes and transportation systems that allow people that really don't need to come to the core to bypass the core.

As you know, with your help, we've been making investments through the 2010 bond or starting to make investments out at the y at oak hill, we are making investments at mopac at 290, down at ben white and mopac, the completion of the interchanges and i-35.

The ctrma, the regional mobility authority, is getting ready to go to work on 183, we know txdot is involved as well as 130.

We are helping the people avoid the central core.

That's important because we know there are some trips that will never be served by transit that just need to get around austin basically.

That's what our plan there is.

But we are also focused on how do we get more people into the core.

So when we think about getting in and out of the core, given the constraints, given the challenges, we really don't have a lot of room for highways and as txdot has said, we can't fix our mobility problem with roads alone.

And so when we look at how we get people in and out of the core, we've got to think beyond our traditional ways of serving mobility, ie roads.

So that's where you see the last bond programs investing in pedestrian and bicycle routes in and out of central austin and certainly why you see us now talking about a rail system.

With our partners, that be lone star and capital metro, we have been working to define a regional transit plan.

That is comprised of everything from new arterial rapid bus and regional commuter bus to various modes of rail.

And we have recently, through the project connect, illustrated this plan that's before you that you see reaches out from the central core and touches many of not only our inner neighborhoods, but also provides the opportunity to reach out to our distant suburbs, whether they be kyle, san marcos or round rock to the north.

It allows us to reach out in those areas that are geographically conducive to transit to serve our distant suburbs as well as our central core area within the city.

When we look at urban rail, I want to stress something.

This is not the first high capacity transit investment in this region.

Actually, we believe it represents the third highest capacity transit investment within this region.

Of course, we have the commuter rail that's operating, which the city has now been participating in extending that service.

That goes to leander.

We have the arterial rapid bus, that is going to construction now.

And that's important because those are important corridors as we've talked about before, those are -- those are some of the most dense transit ridership on current bus, so the arterial rapid bus will certainly improve that ridership and continue to improve that service.

Then on top of it would be urban rail is the third high capacity transit investment in this region.

I would like to talk about the coverage that those various investments provide.

When we think about transit, we typically think of about half a mile coverage for people who can walk and easily get to transit of the so when we look at commuter rail, we see the red line, you see what portion of our inner city is covered or served in a sense by that investment.

That's followed up by arterial rapid, again these lines represent about a half mile on either side of the corridor.

You'll notice a significant difference between commuter rail and rapid bus because rapid bus is able to have more stops than commuter rail, it has a great coverage of its corridor than urban rail does or commuter rail does.

>> When we place urban rail in there, you will see us covering similar to rapid bus because our stops are more frequent than commuter rail.

But you see here that this -- this figure illustrates that we're really adding that third investment.

A separate corridor.

Now, I just got my congratulations card from the university of texas for having finished 25 years ago.

And so I -- so I am trying to tell you that it's only by come incidence that our line looks like a hook 'em horns up here on the figure.

But we realize after we put the coverage up there.

Urban rail certainly is a separate corridor from those other two corridors as I've said.

It penetrates the core and provides a -- provides a cross-platform opportunity to transfer between all three modes that is provided in downtown.

What I would like to talk to you about is how we got to the mode and the phasing recommendations that are before you now with urban rail as part of the third investment.

First of all, I would like to talk about the modes that we evaluated.

As you can see here, on the left side of this slide, we looked at everything from conventional bus, essentially what's there today, all the way up to more exotic transit modes monorail and people mover because we know that people looked at those before.

We found the three most viable modes are conventional bus as the baseline to compare against, better bus or bus rapid, sort of blending those two technologies or concepts together to provide a high capacity bus mode and then really blending together street car and light rail into a mode we're calling urban rail that really looks at anything from the portland street car type of service up to the new more modern, denver, light rail system that also runs in the street.

And so that really represents the range of technologies that we have continued to carry through since, golly, about 2006, evaluating all the way through to today.

So how did we come up with those evaluation and that recommendation?

Through the central austin transit study, we evaluated the various modes against six primary criteria.

Whether they be improved place connectivity, how does the transit mode reenhanse the surrounding land uses, to maximizing economic development, how likely is it to -- to generate economic development off the investment or the perceived public investment.

And what you will notice in this -- in this slide here, or in that report, is that on some criteria, urban rail was ranked to clearly outperform rapid bus.

In this case, improved place connectivity because urban rail generates the development response that -- that results in a more substantial investment by developers, because we were told the developers were -- were more likely to -- to make long-term, high quality permanent investments, we ranked urban rail over better bus in terms of developing place connectivity and tying major places, major activity centers together with an urban factor.

A large driver of t ranking was the system-wide estimates that were done at the time -- these were done under the original capital metro analysis of these two modes as parts of their circulator study where urban rail generated something like three times the potential ridership of the bus, given the same frequencies.

Remember buses, buses that we would use, in comparison to the rail, have a smaller capacity per vehicle.

And so in order to generate the same level of ridership, you have to put a lot more buses on.

So this estimate was assumed that you would put as many buses on that could generate the ridership or the demand that responded.

So what we ends up with is an urban rail system-wide ridership of about three times what the buses were.

On other criteria, you will notice that -- that better bus was able to achieve similar levels of performance as urban rail.

So in this case, improved transit connectivity, because the routes were identical, because the routes would be timed to meet the next level of transit, whether it be commuter rail or the metro rapid line, the two technologies were viewed as providing similar levels of transit connectivity.

So a little bit different measure.

In the end, however, when we added up the various scores, clearly urban rail was perceived to outperform better bus in terms of the corridor that we were looking at.

I want to stress that.

Because the way that you evaluate transit corridors and modes, you identify the corridor that you are trying to serve, you identify the goals and objectives related to that corridor and then you identify the best mode to meet that corridor's needs.

And so, again, in the corridors that we're looking at, old airport to new airport, it seemed to us as we evaluated it that urban rail outperformed on the -- on the overall, the better bus alternative.

Now, through the alternative analysis process that is ongoing, we continue to carry both modes.

What we're talking about today is refining the alignment as we go forward.

So that gets us to the first investment analysis.

This is the work that's been completed most recently.

For a long time we've been talking about the total system.

So itching get to identify what we would recommend to you as the first investment or first phase, if you will.

Again we looked at six primary criteria, ranging from provide greater mobility options to improve access to and linkages between regional and high capacity modes, to encourage investment in economic development.

Excuse me.

As you know from the report, we delivered to you, now several weeks ago or two weeks ago, I guess, we took a look at the corridor and divided it up into natural -- natural portions of the element -- or the corridor, if you will.

We looked at a core that really met our basic necessity to connect downtown to the capitol complex to the university of also know from national experience that airports are important to get to, but they often don't generate the level of ridership to justify themselves.

Think about this, in this corridor, when we get to the airport we are on the opposite side of the runway to get to the terminal.

So we have to go a long way to get to the terminal.

That doesn't generate ridership.

You really need to find a reason when that time is right to get to the terminal.

It's our estimate very early that our corridor past pleasant valley didn't quite make that yet, so we spend our time analyzing the south piece between the convention center and pleasant valley.

The reason for that is we know that's traditionally a very good corridor.

So in going back to why the airport was originally part of our corridor plan, it's because it happens to sit at the end of a very good corridor.

But we thought we needed to get this first piece built if we were going to do that.

So then analyzing that, what we found, again this is in your full report, obviously the longest options provided the greatest mobility benefits, the greatest community benefits, provided the greatest capacity, certainly tying the south part of austin to the north part of austin together.

And makes a lot of sense.

Some things have changed, though, since we began this study.

First of all, the riverside corridor has started to be redeveloped, so many of the students that were originally the goal of serving riverside have moved to west campus and moved to new developments in the north part, north of the river, specifically in the hyde park and north of hyde park area.

We've subsequently learned that there's a number of bridges, more than just the crossing of the river, that we have to contemplate once we commit to going south.

And so when we look at that, and put all of that into context, what we find is a couple of interesting things.

Mueller extension or an extension to mueller is generally equivalent to the riverside corridor.

When you he -- all of the advantages and disadvantages are the same.

And that's important because two things or one thing that both mueller and riverside corridor allow us is a place for a maintenance facility, which is sort of a practical thing that you have to have.

A permanent maintenance facility.

If you don't either get to riverside or mueller, you have to contemplate an interim maintenance facility or a permanent maintenance facility in an area of town that is potentially -- has a higher and better use.

Ie the downtown.

You have to contemplate a maintenance facility there.

So we believed it was important to get to one of those two things.

Either mueller or riverside.

When we compared the cost and risk in terms of environmental and construction complexity, that's why we've come back and recommended that we start with a phase 1, just north of the river, that clearly state to the community that getting to the south of the river is important as well.

But we need to put it on a different time line that gives us a little bit longer time to work out, as I said, the construction complexity, which equates to risk, which equates to cost.

And so we've suggested that we lag the first phase, on phase 2 and put some more effort into better understanding phase 2.

>> Certainly this priority provides the highest ridership potential, the greatest concentration of employment.

There is a nexus for high capacity transit in the region's core, clearly.

We have heard from our consultant, federal consultant that this corridor would look very good.

This also follows his recommendation to simplify the overall proposed investment making it that much more competitive when we go to the federal level and so we're very confident about its competitiveness.

Certainly, the system plan being worked out through project connect suggests the community may [indiscernible] in the future.

What I would like to do is walk you through the corridor.

Some of the major definitions within the core as well as along red river and to the north it might be served by this investment.

Starting at a convention, clearly a good connection with the red line somewhere along fourth street which is very viable with this alternative, the convention center could potentially be a transit focus in the future as we think about regional buses coming up i-35, perhaps also circulating by the convention center, gives our convention center much like denver and salt lake and seattle a very strong transit focus and a nexus for visitors to our community to travel between.

We would also serve with the first investment the financial core along fourth and congress as well as the austonian sits right there along first and congress.

You have noticed we have also phased congress versus guadalupe and lavaca.

Quite mondaysly to rebuild congress or to build on congress we have to contemplate rebuilding the pedestrian scape in that corridor, given that we thought it would be easier given other investments going into the lavaca and going up lavaca first and then follow up in if phase 2 with congress.

What's key here in this slide shows you the financial core is well within walking distance of the station that might be there at fourth and congress, so a very strong connection to the financial corridor.

Moving along, we obviously serve lavaca, antone's, as well as the county courthouse, complex, current employment facility as well as the envision county courthouse or county complex down along fourth street.

Capitol, state offices, both south of the capitol and north, emerging along 17th street is well served, bob bullock as well as the university medical center and facilities along the san jacinto corridor.

Dkr memorial stadium, universities of texas, I get asked about how this service might operate during game day, peak loud, so many pedestrians along university you would probably operate within the two ends into dkr and back using the red line as the loop for pedestrians to get all the way around.

So it's a very good concept for how we would operate there.

Moving further north the david's corridor and the development going along red river, it allows you to preserve the current single family historic residences along there, they do not have to

change, there's plenty of properties that are already high density to supply the demand that we believe would be there.

In the north we serve the h.e.b. at hancock center.

What's interesting this is not only in the region but we believe their entire system.

There is an opportunity along this entire system to serve something like four 's, whether they are there now or emerging along with serving whole foods and other facilities.

A number of cities have told us that -- that, you know, being able to serve major retail grocery retail destinations is a huge plus for any -- any rail system that might be built and one many of envious of.

Lastly, we would certainly serve mueller with an extension to a possible maintenance facility, not only the -- the not only the maintenance center but also the delavan children's facility there at mueller, so it's a pretty strong corridor there we believe in terms of destinations, dell children's center.

We are working on new estimates, but able to glean projections off previous work that's been done.

We believe that the north portion of the original system plan could generate something like nine to 11,000 one-way trips per day for the first investment.

That certainly makes that a very strong corridor.

And those are 20 -- opening day, if you will, 2018, 2019, 2020 type of numbers, so we believe this would be a strong corridor.

I do want to point out that the region is working on a new regional forecast model that is fta compliant.

We believe that when you start to do the things that other transit agencies do, like force feed your rail system with routes, bus routes to save money so that you're not running competitive service all the way downtown, when you start to see development reorganize itself to take advantage of rail service, that these actual estimates of ridership will significantly go up.

Even for opening day, if you will.

And then we're often asked questions about prioritization.

How much of this first corridor could have transit prioritization?

Meaning either dedicated lanes or semi dedicated lanes.

I qualify that when I say many areas that run this type of transit allow private automobiles to run in the same lanes as the transit but only for a block.

For instance along guadalupe and lavaca where there are heavy right turns you would probably allow the cars to get in those lanes and take right turns, as the transit vehicle is approaching, they will clear out the vehicles ahead of it.

Other places like for instance across a future bridge, obviously, that would be totally exclusive.

Fourth street, given the service plan and demand for ridership, you would have enough vehicles, that would pretty well be self enforcing that most people would not want to drive along fourth street.

So you can get a high percentage of this corridor to be transit priority or transit only lanes.

We estimate about 70%.

And you will notice that that does not count the part of the corridor through the university of texas, but i want to talk about that.

If you think about during the day, trying to get through university of texas on san jacinto, really tom cars that are -- really the only cars that are encouraged or allowed to go through there are transit vehicles, buses or people headed to the garages, there's not a lot of vehicle traffic on san jacinto during the day, there they are essentially transit oriented.

We will continue to work to tighten those policies to make sure they are [indiscernible], so that 70% in a sense is a bottom floor threshold for how much of this corridor could well be prioritized for transit.

Another question that was asked was how do we organize to make sure this operates sufficiently and in coordination with our other transit infrastructure within the region.

As you know, the region has been working through prong connect to come up with a concept for not only a system plan, but how you might operate it.

The most recent plan and the one that's being recommended currently is really to continue our partnership that we've created through project connect.

So that we have a single to the user a single concept for transit.

So that you wouldn't perceive a difference, whether you step on or off an urban rail system on to a --

>> robert, sorry.

Looks like we're getting off into a different subject here.

I just wonder if this would be a good time to pause and it's been -- a lot of information that we have gotten about routeing, mainly, see if we have any questions to talk about routing and then go on to that part.

>> Absolutely.

>> I think -- I just wants to make a comments that the city of austin of course is not the sole determiner of what that routing is going to be.

We're going to have partners in this operation.

Hopefully we're going to have partners.

And I know there's been a lot of discussion for a long time about routing through the university of texas area.

And I just want to say that routing that has -- that you've showed on your maps is primarily the result of -- of getting input from the university of texas.

What they want.

And they're going to have a big say-so in this because hopefully they will be one of the contributors in terms of in-kind donations for a -- in setting up our funds for -- to apply for matching funds to the federal government in terms of donating right away.

We are basically listening to other folks and not just -- not just imposing our own opinions about where this rail line should go.

And I would just make one more quick comments.

You know, your comment is very appropriate about going through the u.t. area.

Not really needing to be dedicated.

I think they can use a cattle guard instead, that would work just fine.

[Laughter]

>> well put.

[Laughter]

>> mainly pedestrian traffic.

>> Yes.

>> And again, mayor, this technology works with pedestrians very safely.

So it would work --

>> you mean the cattle guard?

>> Yes, yes [laughter]

>> all right.

>> Mayor, I just wanted to follow-up on that line of questioning.

I guess that I would start with your thoughts since you followed up with them, because partners are very important.

And we just kind of need to -- to know as much as we can know that they have or have not committed to -- first of all, with the university of texas, I would think that -- that a system would reduce their need for buses.

Is that -- is that true?

>> Mayor pro tem, we have not gotten to that level of -- of route planning yet.

But clearly other systems as they have gone into corridors have been able to either truncate or change routes to reduce the costs of the bus system.

So, yes, it is quite highly would be able to reduce the number of buses in those corridors, yes.

>> And is -- is there precedent in other cities for universities actually participating in a rail system?

>> I don't know if I can really answer precedents.

Certainly other universities have had strong positions, the university of washington certainly has had a very strong financial.

>> Cole: I mean financial support.

>> I don't know that answer.

There are other institutions, universities, including prebuying annual passes for their students and so forth.

In fact the university of texas does that now through a student fee.

Certainly buys a certain level of transit for their students on the general system.

So --

>> Mayor Leffingwell: I think the big contribution would be right-of-way.

Portland state university in portland is a good example.

Goes right through their campus.

>> Cole: What kind of value is that?

>> Mayor Leffingwell: Dollar value.

>> Cole: A dollar value but I mean is that right-of-way that more of a capital investment or is that an o and m investment or is it both?

>> Yes.

The cost of right-of-way is included in the current capital cost estimates, general number for -- for right-of-way.

It's not broken out by location, but it certainly in aggregate university included.

So -- so their participation, if they were able to allow that right-of-way or use in return for the value of the service, that would certainly represent a -- represent a huge benefit to the overall system.

It would also be matchable with federal money because it is a valuable asset.

>> Mayor Leffingwell: Mayor pro tem, if for example the city's contribution and local commitment was 200 million and -- and the right-of-way contribution at the university of texas was valued, I'm just picking numbers out, these are not relevant, at 25 million, then your commitment locally to apply for federal matching funds would be 225.

Even though 25 is not cash, it's just value, right-of-way contribution.

>> Would that mean that the value that we would go to the voters for would be less than the 275, that would be the 200 million?

We would reduce it in that manner if we had that commitment before we went to the voters?

>> Mayor Leffingwell: It has that potential to reduce it.

I don't want to attach any numbers to it.

>> Cole: Just whatever they contribute.

>> Mayor Leffingwell: It would reduce the amount that we would have to commit, yeah.

>> Cole: Okay, that's good.

Rob, I don't know if you know this, but -- but I'm assuming that we could deauthorize the bonds if there was not a federal match.

I mean, I'm -- the question is if we go out and -- in november and ask for the 275, and then we know nine months later or a year later that we did not receive -- was it new starts?

New starts funding that we were hoping for.

Is there a way that we could deauthorize the bonds?

>> Greg canale financial services.

If there was a bond election where voters approved an amount, two things would occur.

First of all, obviously you would need to start selling some of the bonds to work on the project.

Any amount that was not spent you could come back and deauthorize those unused bonds via another -- part of a future bond election.

>> Cole: But that would have to be done in a future bond election?

>> To deauthorize the bonds, yes.

>> Cole: So is there a way to issue the bonds -- not issue the bonds, actually put them on the ballot with the contingency that if there is not a federal match, they will be deauthorized pursuant to this bond election?

>> Mayor pro tem, I believe that state law doesn't allow a contingent ballot measure, so it has to be a yes or no vote as far as how you craft the ballot language.

>> Mayor, if I might, mr.

Canale, assuming voter authorization of the bonds, any requirement that the city [indiscernible]

>> no.

There's not -- there's not a requirement issue.

It only gives us the authorization --

>> that's all that it does.

So the -- short of deauthorization and the scenario that the mayor pro tem talked about is simply don't issue the debt.

>> Exactly, right.

>> Mayor Leffingwell: And that would obviously -- that would obviously be the clear intent of whenever a bond election occurs, if it occurs this november or some other time, the clear intent would be this money would never be spent until -- and if, we got federal matching funds.

>> Cole: I was just looking for a way to make that krystal clear to the voters when we approved it.

I'm assuming that if we can't do it actually on the ballot, then we could do it in the supporting materials; is that correct?

>> I believe that of course you could talk about that.

However, under the theory of what is on the ballot is what the citizens are voting for, they're going to vote yes or no.

And not any kind of contingent kind of decision that the voters are being asked to make.

>> Again, I want to underscore, authorization doesn't nece issuance.

>> I understand that now.

I just wanted to make sure -- the options that we had, to make that crystal clear to the voters what we are saying is absolutely correct.

I wanted to make sure that we knew what that was.

I do want to hear -- I was just about to ask mike about it.

>> Before I even get to the financing, I wanted to ask questions about the modes, ridership and routing.

>> Mayor Leffingwell: That's really what we're talking about.

>> Martinez: I have financial questions, i appreciate that.

Before I even get to whether or not we want to pay for it.

I want to talk about whether or not we want it.

And that's part of the initial presentation.

So --

>> Mayor Leffingwell: Yes.

>> Cole: Okay, mayor.

Then with that, I just want to -- I noticed that there was no -- no specific relief contemplated for -
- for mopac initially in phase 1, but it would be a part of the later commuter rail and then I
noticed on page 8 it was there and I wasn't sure, I know we're contemplating definite releases
along 35, that's our highest challenge.

But I wanted to be clear that we were actually contemplating some relief off of 35 and mopac.

>> Mayor Leffingwell: Mopac is actually -- that will be the first thing that happens, but it's not a
rail initiative initially.

It's a managed lane program on mopac.

Finally, at some later date the lone star rail project, we use that right-of-way, but that's -- that's
not a part of the urban rail system.

That's part of the regional system that -- that I think the plan is for it to go ultimately all the way
from georgetown to san antonio.

Initially stopping at san marcos.

>> Cole: I appreciate that, mayor, because I have actually sat on that board for six years, that's
why i brought it up, because i wanted to -- I think it's important that as we talk about the routes,
that we emphasize not just the route of the urban rail, but how it is integrated to a comprehensive
system.

>> Yes, ma'am.

What I think you're talking about is we did not show the connection to lone star rail in the first
investment.

That really is because until that service is -- is enacted, there is a lower need for that connection
early.

But what we've talked about with lone star rail is implementing that connection as part of the
lone star rail first investments in terms of that corridor, so that they match well together.

That generates the need for a -- for a -- for a second routing, if you will, from the west in a sense
up to versus the one that's from the east up to u.t.

That's proposed in this first phase.

But that's very compatible with the system that we have before you right now.

>> Cole: We're putting before the voters an overall system that will connect.

Well, we're putting forward, if I understand --

>> the first phase of a system that we're contemplating that will connect.

>> First phase, yes.

In what I said was the third investment in high capacity transit because others are already making the other first two investments, the commuter metro rail, the bus on lamar and guadalupe and hopefully we'll be able to add a fourth investment shortly, when -- when the express lanes go up mopac and a fifth investment when lone star secures their funding.

So the numbers don't mean the priority, they just -- I'm just counting through.

>> Cole: I think that's important to lay out there.

>> Mayor Leffingwell: Mayor pro tem, I want to assure you that the point that you raise about integrating all of these forms of public transportation, is exactly what we've been talking about in the transit working group, focusing on all of them, when we have representatives if lone star on this group because -- because we have representatives from capital metro and we have representatives from the major population centers in the msa, from round rock to -- to bastrop and san marcos.

>> Cole: So in the transit working group, I saw them on the list, I know you all have been talking about it, but all of us haven't had the benefit of those discussions.

What -- what can you give us some of the take aways about -- about what we're discussing today, the route and to the extent that it's directly relevant to the financing from the transit working group.

>> Mayor Leffingwell: Well, what's before us today we're talking about this initial routeing of a -- of an urban rail system, the back drop of that, is as you saw the master map which shows which -- which transportation corridors would best ultimately be served by which mode, some -- some with managed lanes as in mopac, we're talking about the local, not the regional transportation, some with commuter rail, some with urban rail and some with express buses.

And all of the planning is being done with -- with making sure that -- that services are not do you know duplicated that they are complimentary and all work together when they are all ultimately built out.

>> Cole: So has the transit working group actually approved the map that we're seeing today?

Is that a reflection of the work of the transit working group?

>> Mayor Leffingwell: I think approved is probably too strong of a word, it's still involving.

But the transit working group has had input into this map over the last few months.

We have done a lot of exercises to determine where these major transportation corridors are with what the most -- which corridors are in most need and defining the quickest action and then worked on which particular public transportation mode best serves each corridor.

>> As you know, I'll sitting on the actual subcommittee of campo that's dealing with the managed lane issue on mopac and the funding that campo has received.

How it will be negotiated with the rma.

One of those issues have -- has been and some of our discussion about bus rapid transit.

And managed lanes for -- for -- for i-35 in fact.

So can you say a little bit about how the managed lanes potentially along i-35 would -- would -- could impact the system and be complimentary?

>> Sure.

If I could go back to slide 9 please that shows the full system?

>> Here we go, this is the full system plan that shows all of the different modes potentially evolving in the system.

One point of reference, much of which is -- much of this is already in the 2035 adopted campo plan.

The pieces that are not in there are those that are highlighted in pink plus the i-35 actually both of those are in there.

But as you see there on the eastern side, you see i-35 with the brown dots, those are the express lanes or the proposed express lanes on i-35.

What's envisioned there is -- is express bus or transit would come from southeast part of the region, hays county, up that corridor, could exit either riverside or cesar chavez and come into the heart of the city.

And then rejoin the i-35 corridor, let's say at the martin luther king, jr.

Juncture and go on north.

What's interesting is there's currently a transit system operating along this corridor without express lanes, that's of course bobcat transit is operating routes.

What we've heard informally is that those routes are full.

With not just students, but with people who work and have business in san marcos.

That they are "leaving people at their stations because the buses are full"

and they are achieving an 80% recovery rate through their fare box.

So it's a very effective transit system.

That would certainly be benefited by express lanes that could operate on the east central side of downtown.

It would not conflict.

It would enhance, in fact, urban rail investments as you see those are really different corridors as you stretch out to the east.

And parallel i-35.

Because remember once those buses are on those express lanes, they are not stopping so they really don't have coverage until they stop.

>> Cole: Okay.

I have one last question for -- for my colleagues who actually sit on the capital metro board.

Councilmember riley or councilmember martinez.

Just like I asked the mayor, I'm wondering if there's any specific take away that we need to know about from the discussions at capital metro about their involvement in our contemplated rail system.

I don't know, I just saw capital metro listed and i would rather hear it from you than just about anybody else.

>> I know -- right now, capital metro is very focused on implementing its part of this picture, in particular focusing on bus

[09:48:00]

rapid transit, which -- which is expected to be operational within the next couple of years.

We -- we have had a good working relationship with the city on this.

It is going to be a challenge to figure out exactly how it's going to work.

How the different modes will -- will share the right-of-way.

Especially on those key downtown corridors when that is the subject of ongoing discussion.

I would be interested in hearing from-- from rob and others about how that's been going, in particular on -- on -- on the question about -- about the dedicated transit lanes.

It's the expectation for some time has been that -- that we would eventually get to the point where -- where the -- where those bus rapid transit lanes downtown would actually be dedicated and i don't know where that stands right now in terms of timing.

But I think that's been an ongoing conversation.

>> Yes, sir, councilmember.

We are currently working with capital metro on identifying how we could provide dedicated transit lanes on guadalupe and lavaca in the downtown area.

Between, for instance, fourth and 17th street or even north and south of those areas.

Because capital metro is proposing to move much of their transit service to that corridor, it really makes sense [indiscernible] has its own operating [indiscernible] so that's what we're working on.

In addition what we would like to do is identify with capital metro criteria, if you will, as to when we look at managed lanes.

As we look at the north lamar-guadalupe corridor to the north of there, we start to get into very tight right-of-way where we don't have an opportunity to organize the transit because much of the transit has spread out from that point.

So we have to start looking at the -- start to contemplate new right-of-way or how do you get it that's really the issue.

And so we want to work with

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capital metro on policies to identify when you might look at that.

Part of the issue is identifying what kind of benefits you would expect to get from that dedicated right-of-way.

Can you achieve it through other means, for instance, signal control, stop policies, policies and so forth.

So it is a combined effort, we're moving forward with them.

They begin construction, i believe, at the first of the year on their systems.

We're already working with them on the signal systems to update the signal system.

To better communicate to the buses.

And so we plan to -- to be hand in hand with them as we walk through that issue downtown.

>> Cole: Thank you.

>> Martinez: To add to that, first of all, chris is right.

I want to thank the city staff for the relationship with capital metro and the work that's gun on so far in trying to plan this and figure out how capital metro fits into it.

Here's another point very important to you, that is the financial aspect.

That is on the table.

You know, as everyone in this community knows, financially capital metro has probably been in the worst place it's ever been over the last few years.

But we have made major improvements at the agency.

We have tightened our finances and implemented all of the recommended changes over the last two years.

As our financial picture improves, we certainly, i certainly as a board member see a value in -- in being not just a participating partner, infrastructurally and through the different modes, but as well financially.

If capital metro is in a position to dedicate, you know, a revenue source for o and m, that is certainly something we're working towards in terms of trying to create the financing that's necessary on capital metro's side.

[09:52:00]

There's no decisions made.

No action taken by the capital metro board other than to say we certainly want to be a part of this, we are the transit authority for the region and we're going to be here, you know, no matter what happens moving forward.

>> Cole: Let me ask you a question because we -- if there were -- if there were funds made available for more bus rapid transit, consistent with capital metro's plans kind of like we've done with other things, would that free up more funding for you guys for o and m.

>> Martinez: Interesting point because that's in one of the slides.

It's cheaper to start it, but it's way more expensive to run it.

So when you first start it, it's cheap.

The buses are much cheaper than rail because you don't have dedicated right-of-way, you don't have the infrastructure improvements, you don't have all of that going into start-up costs.

You have a rubber tire system, very cheap.

Over the long term, you have more employees.

With higher salaries, with more benefits, with retirement plans, that becomes way more expensive to operate over time than a rail system.

Believe it or not.

That's in unwith of the slides and I had a question about that because I want folks to understand that.

You know, when we're talking about going out for a vote, it's 250 million, 275 million that we're asking citizens to consider, sounds like a lot.

It is a lot.

You inevitably hear the other side of it saying why don't we rubber tire system this, it's cheap, we could do \$50 million in a rubber tired system and save taxpayer monies and have good transportation options?

Valid points.

But what doesn't get discussed is what happens 20 or 30 or 10 years from now when you have to replace that fleet, expand it, hire all of the employees to upkeep it.

It is inevitably more costly in the long run.

And that's something that we need to discuss and

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contemplate as well.

>> Cole: Okay, so it would help, but not necessarily relief.

Okay.

Thank you, mayor.

>> Mayor Leffingwell: That's well said, councilmember.

The operating costs of a rubber tired system are much higher than the rail system.

>> Tovo: Mayor, I know that I don't have the floor, I had a question about that slide as well.

Well.

>> Mayor Leffingwell: You do now.

>> Tovo: That was one of the points that grabbed my attention as you went through that presentation.

I wondered if there were other costs that you could elaborate on that make bus operations cost more than rail.

That's very interesting and I think one that doesn't emerge often and I think it's critical that we have some understanding of why that is.

>> Certainly.

Both to the capital because both rubber tired vehicles need to be replaced two to three more times more frequently than rail vehicles, modern rail vehicles are lasting much longer, they can actually be refurbished if necessary after 25 or 30 years.

Whereas buses really start to wear out at about eight, 10, 12 years.

So modern maintenance practice, would have you replacing those about two to three times over.

Obviously, to get the same capacity because trains can carry more people per vehicle, better -- that are commercially available, you need more drivers, as councilmember martinez said, and so all of that adds up.

I think the other thing that is unique is that rail, because of its permanence, because of the tracks in the street, tend to drive a -- drive a -- drive a more responsive public in terms of allowing that vehicle to have the right-of-way, to stay out of its way basically as opposed to a bus, there's the perception, false perception, I will say, that the bus is just

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another vehicle and can stop and deal with traffic just like everybody else.

That just makes it more challenging to operate a bus system over time.

But then getting back to the capacity, the more vehicles that you have, the more mechanics that you have, so that's what drives the cost, long-term, of operations up to where rail is very competitive in terms of those costs.

I will point out, remember, we are still -- we are still in the midst of an alternatives analysis of the federal process where we will continue to analyze the bus option as well as the rail option so that until the final investment decision is made, and the feds hopefully join us in that investment, we would always have the option of an alternative.

So that the public has a good understanding of where we're headed.

>> Do you have any -- do you have any charts in any of the other reports or some other materials that you presented that really lay out these differences in terms of the setup costs compared to the ongoing maintenance and operations costs?

>> I can get you detailed information if you would like.

It's backup information as part of the central austin transit study that really made that recommendation.

So I will make sure that my staff gets that to you and all councilmembers.

>> That would be great, thank you.

>> Tovo: I don't know if mayor pro tem cole had other questions or if I could just carry on.

I just have a few others.

spiller you talked about, you used the term force fed bus service.

>> Force feed.

>> Force feed bus service.

I think that I understood from the context more or less what you were getting at but you would just explain that --

>> right now just to give you an example, we have buses that come from generally the same service area into -- into downtown.

So instead of doing that, you would start to run those buses perhaps smaller buses as time transfer vehicles, so they would circulate out into the community and come back to the transit center,

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if you picture almost like a child's drawing of a daisy, that's what you would do with the major stations of rail, the bus routes would circulate out and bring people from beyond that half mile dance from the station -- distance from the station into the station and force feed that rail station.

That saves money in the sense that those routes are not committed to a long distance travel to downtown or a longer distance travel to downtown.

It allows you to put those buses back into service quicker, so you can run with fewer buses.

Ultimately a cost savings there.

Basically, you would look at your system for competing transit services and instead of having those go all the way downtown, bringing them in.

We have a -- we have a -- well, that's what it is.

And I think that concept has been brought up by citizens saying why can't we use these, whether it be bus rapid or the express bus or urban rail as the line haul system and use buses to bring people to them.

>> I see.

And I think the point that you were making is that if you did that, at intervals along the urban rail line, that would drive the ridership up beyond the estimates that you had in your slide?

>> I believe, yes, yes.

>> Tovo: Okay.

So you had made the point that in other cities ridership along an airport line tends not to be -- not to be very -- not their highest ridership opportunities I think you said.

>> Ridership to the airport tends to be lower.

The airport in itself tends not to be a major generator in terms of daily transit riders.

When there's conventions, when there's events, certainly -- certainly the airport drives ridership potentially.

But conventional wisdom is that people don't tend to lug their luggage and family on the train to get to the airport.

They tend to take a taxi or a car or their own vehicle.

Now, austin is unique because much like washington , we know that lots of people come here just to do business during the day and then leave.

And so I do believe our -- our extension to the airport will be viable, at some points.

And just knowing that we have to get out to pleasant valley before we can even contemplate gender equity to the airport -- we can even contemplate getting to the airport, that was the reason we --

>> Mayor Leffingwell: Can I make a comments on that, i believe everything that you said.

If it is economically feasible to have a rail line going out towards the airport, out riverside drive, then potentially down the road subsequent phase perhaps it might be feasible to extend it to the airport.

>> Absolutely.

>> Mayor Leffingwell: Because -- because one major reason is because the airport, potentially, could be able to pay for that themselves.

The airport, as you know, can't otherwise participate in city infrastructure projects, basically they can't spend money off the airport property.

Even though we own the airport.

They are restricted by the federal government.

But potentially down the road they -- even though it's not -- economically feasible, it might be a convenience they could choose for pay for for a future extension.

[One moment please for change in captioners]

>> exactly.

Again, a unique situation.

Portland currently has an extension out to their airport.

Again, a unique situation, very successful.

It was an extension off a very successful line.

So it goes through neighborhoods that are very successful.

So that's a very good example.

Washington, d.c.

International, again, a unique situation where you've got numerous business people coming in just going to see -- do congressional business, so they're clearly coming just with a briefcase often and not a lot of luggage exchanged.

Even there for a long time you had to walk across the parking lot to get to the station.

It wasn't directly in the terminal.

So those are three examples.

>> Tovo: Thank you.

And my last question, from time to time we've gotten feedback about routes when proposing different alignments and I'm sure you've heard lots of suggestions.

One of them that has come up multiple times is a route along guadalupe and lamar and lavaca.

I think we all got an email about that today.

Could you just addre why the alternative that you've considered and why that makes more sense in your opinion based on your various matrixes and other evaluation tools?

>> I would like to reiterate a point.

And as soon as slide 10 gets back up -- here we go.

This slide shows the coverage that each of the corridors provide.

One of the things I hope you recognize here is that we're looking -- when he talk about guadalupe and lavaca and we talk about the corridor that's proposed for urban rail, we really are looking at three different corridors.

Two served by bus and one served by urban rail.

You cannot walk between the north lamar corridor and the corridor that we're talking about.

So they really are different corridors.

When you're doing alternatives analysis and you define what your issues are and you pick a corridor -- and that was a decision that was made a number of years ago actually as part of a capital metro study, circulator studies.

Getting to mueller, getting to the university, connecting the university with the capitol complex and heading out eventually out the riverside corridor was seen as a viable corridor.

It is not in competition with the north lamar.

Those are two very good corridors.

Complicating that issue is in the north lamar, the region has made an investment that -- for which we've gotten federal monies for.

And so that corridor will be well served.

To get dedicated lanes in that corridor will be difficult I think from a pure municipal perspective because you're looking at a four to five-lane maximum width corridor.

So that means we either have to contemplate taking from the east side or west side to generate enough room for that capacity.

With the current federal investment, we think that it would be wise to go ahead and build that investment, operate it, good good experience on there before we make a supplemental investment in urban rail.

It was identified as a future corridor as part of a regional project.

I think as a region we have to ask would that be our next highest priority given we have a high capacity transit system operating in that corridor after 2013.

So that was really the reasoning is it was crude as a separate -- it was viewed as a separate corridor.

Not better or worse, just separate.

They're both very good corridors.

>> Tovo: Just to summarize the reason a little bit.

More difficult along that corridor to get dedicated right-of-way and also it has a good alternative proposed for it already.

>> That precedes, yes, ma'am.

That precedes the current proposal.

So it would seem wise to go to a third corridor and spread that coverage even that much more.

>> Tovo: Do you think that corridor, all of those issues aside, would have generated more ridership or could generate more ridership than the one that's before us?

>> I'm not sure about that one way or the other.

I really don't know.

I think a lot of the employment centers you have to go further to get to on that corridor.

Getting to the triangle was fairly comparable to the corridor that we've identified in terms of distance, but then some of the other major employment centers you have to go quite a bit north of there.

So I think you would generate similar ridership.

I think when we look at the service along those corridors or one of those two north corridors, whether it be the one that splits off to the west or the one that goes off lamar, it currently generates some of the highest ridership in the city right now on a bus system that is in a sense caught in the traffic that we all are subject to.

I think by implementing bus rapid you will improve that ridership within a market that is built around the bus.

So I think it's a good investment.

There you go.

>> Tovo: Okay.

Thank you.

>> Mayor Leffingwell: Councilmember martinez.

>> Martinez: Thank you.

Those questions cut down significantly on mine, but i want to go back to slide 10 briefly.

There's a couple of things.

What do we use as a benchmark for the distance that an individual will potentially walk to get to the system?

>> Again, industry standards between a quarter and a half a mile.

The younger your customer base, like in university towns you tend to go to the half mile.

So what's illustrated here is half mile.

Around the individual stations.

So with bus rapid and urban rail, those stations are anywhere from downtown two or three blocks apart to quarter mile.

At that spacing the coverage starts to run together and you get the continuous corridor look compared to commuter rail when you're traveling quite a bit of distance between stations.

What's shown here is the commuter sheds of people who might drive.

And clearly there you would see a greater coverage area of commuter rail.

So this only represents those people that walk potentially.

>> Martinez: Great.

Thank you.

On -- I don't want to get into the weeds with this, but it's still frequently asked of me about monorail.

I know you said that was one of the modes that you use or that you looked into as part of coming up with this proposal.

Can you briefly I guess give a broad percentage in terms of what is -- I assume that the prohibition for monorail is costs as a recommendation, but maybe not.

Can you explain why not?

>> I will share with you my memory of that discussion, which was very early in the study why we moved away from elevated -- not just monorail, but elevated sections as the primary delivery mode.

Yes, cost is an issue.

When you think about construction methods, if building at grade or on the ground surface is x, elevated -- is typically more.

I know this city is building a big tunnel right now, but that's just water and it doesn't have the fire and safety and that drives up the cost, but the envelope for tunneling.

So very early it was viewed, given the size of our city, the size of our economy here that a surface running transit system would run a service very well.

Monorail also has some construction issues, when we think about monorail we often think about the disneyland experience.

When you put monorail into a service or a public service, public transit environment, then you have to realize you have to start adding significant railings and walkways adjacent to the monorail for evacuation, especially persons with disabilities becomes more difficult.

So that adds to the overhead structure.

And that's true with any kind of overhead system, whether it's monorail or not.

Monorail tends to be sleek and most of our experiences are either disneyland or the seattle monorail, which is very short.

And so that starts to create shading issues.

We knew that when that decision was also being made there was a lot of discussion about sky bridges and the aversion of the community to elevated structures across their downtown arterials.

Often they can create a -- are suspected of creating a blight issue on the street below because nobody wants to hang out under the monorail.

So those were challenges that were understood.

At the time the las vegas monorail was having trouble getting started that was a privately funded monorail system.

They were having trouble keeping pieces on the train.

There were numerous pieces falling off the train.

In that same time frame they had implemented bus rapid and they were actually generating higher ridership on the bus rapid than monorail.

It's my understanding that the monorail system may have closed recently.

Those are all issues as to why we chose not to go with an elevated system.

We weren't just picking on monorail.

>> Martinez: So as a general rule monorail is 2 x and underground --

>> I heard two million a mile underground.

That's the number they gave us in dallas.

I think they've got a little over a mile, maybe two miles of underground in their light rail system in the downtown area.

So that was just off the top of my head, back of the napkin number.

It could be more than that.

>> Martinez: Maybe convert the waller creek tunnel if necessary?

>> Mayor Leffingwell: There you go.

Actually, central expressway in dallas has a flood relief tunnel and a light rail tunnel side by side.

Maybe we could just double up there.

[Laughter]

>> Martinez: I appreciate in slide 14 you did add some projected daily ridership numbers.

But in this slide you project urban rail at 27,600 daily trips.

Is that the full four cores?

>> That was the full system all the way out to the airport.

That was the original numbers we were working with.

Subsequently I showed you a slide that showed I believe nine to 11,000 daily riders.

That was just for the first phase.

>> That was core, core north and mueller?

>> Yes.

The nine to 11.

And that's a projection.

We're still working on the actual forecast that would take many more factors into account.

>> Martinez: I saw on one side earlier we were talking about the extension potentially to abia.

And how in-depth did we get in terms of projecting ridership from a park and ride?

I saw that you have as a future plan a park and ride out there.

Would a park and ride generate enough ridership potentially to justify, along with ridership from abia, the cost that it would take to extend it?

>> We certainly haven't taken that into as detailed a forecast as you would want to before you made that final decision on that element.

But I think what's important is in the corridor that's been proposed, as you go north we see opportunities for either interim or permanent park and rides at hancock as well as mueller.

When he take about an interim park and ride, it's the same concept we were thinking about on riverside.

We know that one of the largest costs for new development is the parking facility.

Essentially what you would do is build a park and ride structure early and as development builds up around it and takes over that parking you would move out to a new location.

So we that I this corridor north and south of the river provides opportunities for park and rides.

We think they're an important part of this overall system.

>> Martinez: On your east-west -- I guess it's either core or core north, why 17th street?

Why not 15th?

Why not mlk?

>> Well, we specifically stayed off mlk because there's so many turn movements.

That's of course where the grid changes orientation.

So the movements between north and south of mrk are difficult just because of the geometry.

We stayed off of there.

We originally looked at a split corridor, 17th and 18th street, like a couple let like we're talking about guadalupe and lavaca.

But as we continued to meet with the state the opportunity for a 17th street transit mall in a sense really are started to present itself.

In their development what they've told us is that they originally were just going to treat the side of the buildings that were facing 17th as sort of non-activated space.

With a transit mall suddenly there then that gives them the opportunity to truly activate the 17th street corridor, whether it be cafes or places for the employees that will fill up that area to activate in.

So 10 '17th really goes right through the heart of that potential campus and gives us a good way to get back to san jacinto.

>> Martinez: So when you use the term transit mall, does that con note that it would only be light rail service through there or is it still shared with vehicular traffic?

>> Councilmember, that level of planning has not been completed.

Certainly when we looked across the country we see both levels.

We see the denver transit mall that's been very successful as transit only, rail and bus together.

And we see transit malls in portland that allow cars to go again one block to access the building, but then they can't go through.

They have to turn off and go to their parking or whatever their doing.

So either way could be facilitated and I think that's detailed development as you go forward.

>> Martinez: What's curious to me is when I look at denver and the success of just that electric bus going from the capital to union station is an amazing corridor.

But then you go to san diego and there's a light rail only corridor and every window is boarded up.

I just want -- I want to make sure that, one, we learn from that, from both cities and others, and not make some of the same mistakes that maybe san diego made or other cities because of the model in denver is truly incredible.

>> Absolutely.

I think in the cities where it has worked very well there's been a clear understanding of the connection between that transit infrastructure and the surrounding policies that need to go into place to create that environment.

And clearly there are cities that have done it right and others that may still be learning.

>> Mayor Leffingwell: Councilmember, I want to assure you that we really are looking at other cities.

A few months ago we had representatives from systems in phoenix and in dallas and in san diego and in sacramento, denver all came to austin for two days and met with the transit working group

and talked about how they had developed their systems and mistakes they had made and things they had done right.

Definitely we're looking at what other people are doing.

>> Martinez: Thanks.

And the last question -- i think I asked you this either in the hallway or in my office or somewhere.

But I wanted to know when we might be able to get a little bit more detail in terms of things like the mueller connection and how it crosses i-35 and where and I know it shows crossing 41st street, but then it's a jump over and doesn't really say how or where.

Do we go under i-35, do we go over it?

>> I can pretty well assure thaw we're going i-35 there, not over it because it would be a long way.

Which is actually one of the other reasons we walked away from an elevated structure because to get over i-35 you have to be way over i-35.

It would be quite the climb.

Those are part of a detailed engineering and studies that come next.

What we next as a community need to do is identify which part of the system we're pursuing first.

And indeed those detailed studies.

Even as to how we interact with the red line needs further study, but from our technical perspective and those of our consultants, when you look at this corridor we're confident that we can find a successful way to not only cross the red line, but get under i-35.

Txdot has said they would be more than willing to work with us because it's a comparable use.

We may be able to actually store some rail vehicles under i-35.

There's all sorts of opportunities for activating that space under i-35 and not only meet the needs of rail, but really benefit the surrounding neighborhoods to make that an asset under i-35 where there's activity going on, positive activity.

>> Martinez: So the two modes literally crossing one another are not an issue.

>> They would have to meet at a signalized crossing, the two rail systems would need to be signalized, but yes, they should be able to cross.

Certainly we'll need to work with capital metro and the federal railroad administration and work to make sure that that is a safe I don't crossing, but we believe that they can cross at the same crossing.

>> Martinez: Thanks, mayor.

>> Riley: Just a few questions.

Starting off with the mode choice.

Given the urban rail option on the particular corridors we're talking about, is grade a concern?

I know there is something of a climb as you move away from the river up lavaca.

>> No.

Modern light rail as well as urban rail technology, street car technologies can handle up to an eight percent grade if necessary, and our grade is not that great.

Lyle I'll what is the maximum --

>> Riley: What is the maximum grade on this route?

>> I can't tell you offhand, but I know it's less than five percent.

Really the only grade in downtown that is of concern is the one block on--

>> Riley: Lavaca?

>> No, over on the san jacinto corridor, but it's not where we're going to be running.

It's a short little very steep block.

>> Riley: Between sixth and seventh.

>> That's its the only grade that worries us and we're staying away from that.

It should not be a problem.

>> Riley: Okay.

And I have to ask about a couple of locations along the route.

First on your slide 27.

You have a note about umc brackenridge at 17th and san jacinto.

Currently when I picture that intersection I think there's parking garages on the west side and then the texas facilities commission and shoals beer garden on the tennis courts.

>> The tennis courts are off trinity.

>> San jacinto is where you have scholtz garden.

>> It's certainly within the walking shed of that location.

There is some benefit of not being right up into the ambulance corridors along red river and so forth.

So /being/(ing)about -- not red river -- yes, red river.

So you have to go across the park that's there and across waller creek to get there.

>> Riley: So this isn't meant to be the location -- [overlapping speakers].

>> But that's where the stop would be.

>> Yes.

>> Riley: Great.

And then we've already talked about the possibility then of the future we could extend westward to seaholm.

They connect with lone star rail.

And one issue we've talked a lot in the past is where we would make the transition from the fourth street corridor down to third street in order to connect with the existing rail right away on third street.

Do we currently have an idea as to where that transition would occur?

>> Yes.

We've recommended that that transition occur at san antonio street and nueces.

So you would split the tracks, so you would do on either side of what i believe will be the county block there.

So san antonio, nueces, to get into third street and then you would go straight across third street.

>> Riley: And cross at third street?

>> Yes.

>> Riley: For businesses that are currently located along the proposed route, can you give us an idea of what they could expect in terms of a construction period that might affect their business?

>> Well, the early part of construction would look much like street construction in terms of utilities.

And that really is the long lead item.

There are certainly linear utilities that can only be replaced as a single run.

So telecom and sewer and water and stuff that needs to be relocated, that would be the early construction.

That would probably happen and then it would close up for a period of time.

The actual tracks were ready to be laid.

We have proposed in the past that we would use a construction technique now being used on the west coast and I believe in salt lake where you move into a block and you do everything that's needed within that block or two blocks and then you close that block up and it's complete.

As opposed to more traditional construction techniques where whoever does the foundation work does it along the whole line and whoever does the next piece of work does it along the line.

And so it increases the cost slightly to do everything block by block or two blocks at a time, but it reduces the impact to the surrounding community.

So that is a detailed construction decision that would be handled during final design, but we certainly heard the community that they want to minimize the impact to the surrounding community as best as possible.

So that's what we'll see.

>> Riley: Do you have any estimates as to how long the utility relocation would take?

>> I do not.

>> Riley: And then the block by block part of it, what have other cities seen in terms of --

>> I know portland have been able to do a block in about a month's time, I believe.

>> [Inaudible - no mic].

>> Riley: One to two months?

>> [Inaudible - no mic].

>> Riley: One to two months per block.

>> But the utilities -- the advantage there is that the utilities get in on their time schedule and get the work done to meet their construction needs and then you seal back up.

So that when you're doing the transit you don't have a big open corridor waiting on utilities to come in and do their work.

It's all done sequentially so they can get in and out.

Some of the drainage work may be able to be done by remote bore.

Those are opportunities to reduce those risks.

And certainly issues that we'll be looking at to make sure that happens.

>> Riley: Okay.

And then in terms of future economic development, I know there are some places along the proposed route where we could reasonably expect to see significant development activity.

Other areas are pretty well already developed.

Do we have -- have we sought to quantify the economic development impact that rail could achieve.

>> I think we have some information on that.

I do not have it on my presentation today.

I do have one slide that talks about the experience of other cities and we have an online video that really captures what the mayor was talking about, the visit by the other transit officials and what they had experienced.

We can certainly make that information available to you.

>> Riley: I think at some point as we get closer to an actual decision on this and we're thinking about the burden that we're asking austin voters to take on, it would be very helpful to have a clear understanding of what we could reasonably expect in terms of the economic development impact that rail could provide.

>> Absolutely.

>> Lastly I wanted to talk about some other rail planning that has been in the work for some time.

I'm not exactly sure what the scope of project connect s I don't know if these other things are on the table in the context of this discussion or not.

But of course at capital metro for a long time we've talked about a green line extending out to manor and elgin.

Then there's also an ongoing north central corridor analysis that is looking at things, including the mokan right-of-way that parallels i-35.

Are any of those options a part of the discussions that you have been having with regional partners in terms of the long-term plans for rail?

>> Councilmember, project connect really helps us reestablish or reaffirm the regional plan in terms of the developments that are in there.

That regional plan does -- the north-central corridor does include the line out to elgin and manor.

I believe capital metro is now engaged in analysis of the north central corridor that coincides with the two high priority corridors that were identified by the region being the core and the north central portion.

But I would have to get information for you on the priorities with regards to the elgin and manor line are.

All of those are in the system plan.

We believe that all of those certainly coordinate well with an urban rail investment through the alternatives analysis and we've committed to look at how best to connect along fourth street with those investments.

So that's what we're moving forward with.

>> Riley: As we move closer to an election, I'd like to make sure we're all on the same page.

That the long-term plans of all the partners are reflected in the long-term transit plan that we are contemplating as a region.

>> Certainly, the manor elgin line and the line to leander and the manage the lanes on mopac, those managed lanes on i-35 i believe are currently included in the 2035 plan.

Now, some of those will be refreshed as we move towards the 2040 plan and there may be extensions,, additional extensions added.

>> Riley: Okay.

>> Mayor Leffingwell: And councilmember, I want to add my assurance to that that we are working with all of the transportation agencies in the area in coordinating these efforts and we're also going to -- we discussed that we meet every friday, by the way, in transit working group, about how we have to coordinate also with the campo plan and make sure that we're both on the same page that the working group, a committee of campo, that our plans are on the same page with the campo 2035 plan and the 2040 plan, which is coming up.

>> Riley: Thanks very much for all your work on this.

>> Thank you.

>> Spelman: Mayor?

>> Mayor Leffingwell: Councilmember spelman.

>> Spelman: From an engineering point of view all this sounds terrific.

You have matrixes and symptoms and I could drill down until the cows come home and we will probably at some point where all these numbers came from and so on.

But in order to get the authority to build this and operate this, we're going to have to get past the voters.

We're going to have to say yes, this is a good thing.

I'm going to spend \$250 million or so of my money to build it.

>> I understand.

>> Spelman: And that's going to follow a political campaign.

And if I were an opponent of this -- I'm not, but if i were and I know some of them, what I would do -- i would starts with what i know how to do, costs too much, does too little.

And we have the information that you've presented here, which makes that a harder argument to make than it was the last time they presented it in response to a train proposal.

The second level of argument I would expect runs something like this and i want to get a sense from you as to how we would respond to it.

I notice that the chair of capital metro and the mayor left the room.

I guess I'm the only person interested in this subject.

Okay.

That's fine.

[Laughter] I am very interested in this.

Here's the story I would give to try and defeat this.

The best four streets to run a transit system through in the city of austin are burnet, lamar -- north lamar, south lamar and south congress.

And capital metro has taken those streets up with this proposal for a bus rapid transit system, which is only approximately one-third as effective as the train system in terms of ridership based on least the corridor we look carefully at.

It is considerably less effective on economic development benefits and the corridors we're looking at I'm pretty sure if we put a pencil to it would be just plain less, have fewer opportunities for economic development, redevelopment opportunities, than north and south lamar, south congress and burnet.

Therefore are we letting the tail wag the dog here?

Would we as a region be better off if we were able somehow to engineer the authority to build a train on our best routes and not pick a train on not as good a corridor?

>> Well, councilmember, I'll go back to early in the process we identified the corridors as separate, lamar and burnet as separate from the corridors we looked at.

And we tailored our objectives in terms of service and on so forth for the corridor we've proposed to you.

In that corridor urban rail out performs bus rapid, i believe, in terms of the service and other things it provides.

>> Spelman: No argument from me on that.

You've done a very good job in demonstrating that.

>> I don't know if you can translate that decision to the guadalupe, lamar, burnet, south congress corridors.

When I look at that corridor I see a very different corridor.

I actually believe bus rapid may with well be the best decision for that corridor because of the lack of right-of-way that is easily given over to transit as we move north in those corridors.

The predominance of current transit users in those corridors that are -- that we're getting really good ridership on the buses now, improving that service i think will go a long way.

So I don't know that I can tell you from an engineering or technical perspective that that's not the right decision in that corridor.

In fact, I would tend to tell you that I think that is the right decision in that corridor because of the characteristics there are different from the corridor we looked at.

Simply because one corridor you find one technology better than the other does not mean you can transfer that automatically to another.

And I think that's overlooked.

A decision whether it was rigorously done or not by capital metro, was made to pursue bus rapid in those corridors and we've since got federal funding for it.

You don't come by 30 or \$40 million very often in terms of a grant.

So I really believe we should go ahead and implement what's there in that corridor and operate it well.

And then look at how we could integrate rail into that corridor.

Urban rail tends to perform better in corridors shorter than bus rapid.

If you will notice the bus rapid corridor is even in the future 2040 extensions of where urban rail might go.

It goes beyond where we would necessarily suggest that urban rail would get to.

Even going south, even though we show urban rail going all the way to south park meadows, there's actually even a better intermediate stop, which is the south congress transit center and the hospital district that's evolving along ben white.

So somewhat shorter.

Bus rapid certainly has characteristics that allow it to perform in a contour around the city that's outside of where urban rail goes.

And so I think you would have to evaluate that corridor in its own right through an alternatives analysis to determine really how best to serve or modify that service in the future.

>> Spelman: This sounds wonderful, but it's hypothetical.

Is there a way in -- I'm purely in practical terms.

If we're talking about going to the voters in, for example, november, is there a way between now and november where in good faith I could pull up a study and say we've actually looked at skaggs, dougherty or whoever else raises this issue, skaggs and dougherty are the most likely guys to raise it.

We've actually looked at that and we have in fact verified that what spillar told us in may was absolutely true that in fact these corridors really would not be better served by a train or the improvement of a train in these corridors would be problematic, extremely expensive, something.

>> No, sir, I cannot.

I cannot promise you that you could get that done between now and november.

And the other thing is that needs to be a public process to decide what's best in that corridor.

I assume capital metro did that when they made the original decision to go to bus rapid.

But you would need to talk to them about that.

I can't answer for them.

>> Spelman: I understand the best way to do this would be a very public process where you have lots of stakeholders involved.

>> Very similar to what we did on the corridor that we're looking at, a public process where we walked through each decision.

>> Spelman: I know how public that process was.

I went to some of those sessions and I heard some of the questions you addressed.

Is there not a private process, not secret process, but more of an engineering-based process where we get at least some of the big pieces out of the way?

What would it cost to operate a train?

What portions of this section could we reasonably expect to get dedicated right-of-way without screwing up traffic patterns, things like that?

Is there an engineering partial solution which is reasonably available to us between now and november?

>> I do not know of one, councilmember; however, through project connect i will tell you that the consultant as well as the team estimated that you would need to invest another \$500 million in bus rapid to generate independent lanes along that corridor.

Now, truth be told -- so that you could take bus rapid to I think what's been termed the ultimate or gold standard -- truth be told, if you wanted independent lanes for rail in that corridor you would have to probably spend about the same amount, I would guess.

And then still construct.

And so that might give you some indication why you would tend towards what they're providing now where you're controlling the signals.

In that corridor one of the challenges are because there's so many driveways, people turning in and out, sometimes the transit vehicle needs to merge into the left-hand lane to get around those vehicles.

You can't do that on rail in those corridors.

So those are all just sort of off the top of my head issues that would be of concern in that corridor.

>> Spelman: That sounds very reasonable, at least as a starting point.

We can certainly work with that.

>> It would be a major effort, though, to answer the question I think that you're looking for.

>> Councilmember, I might add too -- sorry for interrupting.

None of these modes were the silver system.

Not only a high capacity system, but the roadways, the express lane and so we're really at this point the technical team has come to the conclusion do you need either or and the answer is yes, we need both.

And we need all these systems to work together.

So if we've got that corridor covered with a high capacity transit mode that the technical team thinks will be very successful, why should we do anything -- let's spend another part of our funds, constrained funds, in another part of the community to continue to build that system that links together.

That's part of the overall concept is that corridor hopefully check mark, let's move on to something else now in the system that would work as well.

>> Spelman: I spent several months in Ecuador several years ago.

One or two of them are rubber tire and one is train.

I can't remember how many there are, but there are two different modes on these three north-south corridors.

And multiple times I've been on one of those cars and I've forgotten whether I was on the rubber tire or train track because they're identical from the point of view of being passenger.

You're inside, you buy a ticket, board.

They go roughly the same places and stop about the same distances and roughly the same headways.

So they're fundamentally interchangeable parts.

But it was a little easier for them to build rubber tires on one or two of these than it was on the other one.

I think we're in the same position.

It's a situation we'll have to deal with and people will ask us about that and I think we have to deal with those questions.

>> Absolutely.

And the key is looking at each corridor and the last time they said if you've seen one transit system you would see one transit system.

I would take that one step further, if you've seen one corridor, you've seen one corridor.

It doesn't necessarily compare to another corridor.

You really have to look at the unique independent characteristics of each corridor and what your goals are in getting that corridor into an investment opportunity.

>> Spelman: Mayor, in your permission I would like to engage with a colloquy with members of the capital metro board who happen to be sitting right here.

>> Mayor Leffingwell: Colloquies are very appropriate in work sessions.

>> Spelman: Cent.

[Laughter] when you guys were planning the vrt system on this x on burnet, south congress and north and south lamar, did a train cross your mind and did you do any kind of background information looking at whether or not a train would be appropriate for those corridors?

>> I don't see the capital metro staff here.

Of course historically, of course we did look at light rail.

As you recall, the election in 2000 involved the light rail line that would have run up guadalupe.

Essentially the route of the number one bus.

And that's -- that will be the first brt line that goes in.

Yes, it was pretty much considered and the voters chose not to pursue rail on that corridor.

>> But I might add an eye lash and a half.

>> Riley: So I think that capital metro set out to handle that ridership in the best way that we could.

That is a very productive corridor that every 10 minutes or so you can go out there and the buses are pretty much packed everyday.

So it's certainly a transit rich environment along that corridor.

Rail was not really an option at the time that we pursued the brt proposal.

And so we expanded the capacity and with the means that were available to us.

>> Spelman: Has there been any discussion on the cap metro board or so far as you know within the cap metro staff within using brt as a weigh station towards rail downstream?

Let's run the brt and then we can convert it at some future date.

>> Riley: I think we discussed at the last meeting there are requirements for maintaining a brt system in place after we used the federal funds for being there.

I don't remember what the particular time period was for that.

Was it 20, 30 years, something on that order?

>> 20 Years is what the consultant said.

>> Spelman: Is there a means -- I don't know whether I'm trying to open a door or shut a door.

I don't know what answer i want to this question.

But I can see an argument being made and I guess I may as well admit that this is an argument I kind of like is that could we not go to the transit administration and say look, we've got a weird little situation here where we've got two authorities that are interested in mass transit.

One of which is not going to win a rail election and one of which might.

And at least for the foreseeable future.

And we have suggested brt for what I think we would all agree is the most transit rich corridor in town.

And we understand that we've got -- we made a promise we'll keep this for 20 or 30 booth suggested was the amount of time that we are making the promise.

On the other hand, we also understand that there is willingness the citizens to support a train system.

And if we can convert that to a train system with the blessing of fta at some future date we think that would be better serving the citizens of austin, the citizens of the united states of america.

Is there a way we can discuss that?

Is that a kind of discussion we can actually have with fta or is that plain off the table?

>> I would submit that that is a discussion we would want to have.

If your ridership is successful on brt, I would contemplate that fta would support either shifting that service to another corridor to increase capacity and ridership and allowing the light rail system to take over, if you will, because it only -- it will only prove to be more successful in terms of trips per day if you convert from brt to a light rail system.

I don't know the answer, whether fta has hard and fast rules about potentially shifting brt, but I would hope that that would be the dilemma we face is that brt and public transportation is so successful that maybe we can't wait 30 years.

Maybe 10 years from now we see that those transit rich corridors need to be converted and that's a conversation I would love to have even though it would be a difficult one.

>> Spelman: It probably would be, but probably a valuable one to have and it seems to me that that it's the sort of thing that the fta guys would be, a, willing to have.

And b, a lot more willing to have than 10 years from now.

I would not as an fta official be blindsided by wait a minute, here you are changing horses in mid stream.

But if I knew about it in advance that it was something that the citizens of austin were considering then it would be a whole lot easier for me to consider that 10 years from now.

>> I know that we have someone here from the transit working group as well as campo.

John, do you have anything you wanted to add to the conversation?

[Laughter]

>> Mayor Leffingwell: I do have something I would like to add.

We do have a plan.

All plans are subject to change.

We do have a plan that accomodates basically most of the things I think we can do through 2040.

So maybe this is kind of a moot question if we want to come back and start this conversion process.

We've got a lot to do in the meantime to keep us occupied, financially and otherwise.

So that 20 or 30 years may be overcome in the course of events.

>> Spelman: If we had a sense in advance for how we think they might be overcome and then cueing one of our major funding sources in advance that this is something that might happen and we're watching it carefully and we hope you will watch it with us and think through with us the opportunities available as they arise, I think that would be a really valuable conversation for somebody to have.

>> Mayor Leffingwell: Yeah.

And it's a conversation that I'm sure will happen.

I guess the bad news is those of us on the transit working group are already committed not to abandoning ship here in a couple of months, but to continue to work.

And I think one of the charts that you showed, one of the slides that you showed had a little block for the transit working group with a little dashed line towards the executive oversight committee for any entire system.

So this is going to be a committee that continues to work and look at the kind of issues that you have already raised and will continue to raise for potentially years to come.

>> Spelman: I'm certainly not talking about abandoning ship, mayor.

>> Mayor Leffingwell: I know you aren't.

Can I suggest -- I don't know how much more time you have on your original -- how much?

>> Three slides.

>> Mayor Leffingwell: Three slides.

Okay.

Councilmember morrison.

>> Morrison: Sorry to join everybody late.

I do have just one question to follow up on the really great questions that have already been posed.

And that is I realized in talking about the difference in costs between brt and light rail you provided some examples of why it would be in the long-term better to go with brt because the o and m costs are higher.

Is there a rule of thumb that gives us a break-even point?

And I suspect the answer is going to be no because it depends on what system you're talking about.

But I think that that -- knowing that -- if you're only going to run the system for one year it makes sense to do brt.

Obviously we're not going to.

We're going to run the system for a lot of years.

So I wonder are we talking 30 years before it becomes break even?

>> I didn't bring that thumb with me.

I can't answer directly, but I'm sure that's something we could give you an understanding of.

It really has to do with the sustainability and the technology.

Rail vehicles are built for a longer term investment as is the track.

It is more substantial investment.

Buses, because they have to deal with the jarring of the road, the road conditions, changing conditions of the roads, they have other mechanical pieces on them, for instance, kneeling or extending accessible ramps need to be replaced more frequently.

I can get you the information of the frequency of changeover if that helps answer that.

I don't know if there's a specific industry rule of thumb that you're going to operate for 30 years or whatever.

Typically regardless of whether it's a bus rapid or an urban rail, it's a long-term investment that you're committing to a corridor long-term.

So I don't know that anyone said which one is better at a certain cutoff date.

>> Morrison: I think that kind of information about help the conversation if we go to the voters and have this discussion.

>> Sure.

>> Morrison: Thanks.

>> If I could go back to slide 30, I think, or 29.

There it is.

What I was just presenting on this is this is the regional concept for how we would operate to present to the customer a one system approach.

Technology can get us a long ways there, but in terms of common transit fare, common transit ticket or passes, to the user our goal would be that they would not perceive a difference depending on what technology or whatever, even going through a system.

In fact, some of us have cared to dream even big that in the future a region or a super region of the future you might be able to get on a metro rail red line in leander, travel to downtown austin, get on an urban rail system, travel to somewhere in south austin, transfer to the lone star rail, for instance, go to san antonio, get off in the san antonio system on to a street car or whatever bus system they deploy and get to your final destination and be able to use transit throughout the region without having to think about a car.

In fact, a group of local business folks and myself several years ago went to the northwest and spent a weekend traveling from vancouver british columbia all the way to portland as part of a transit tour with the apa, american planning association, and found that we didn't need a car for the whole distance.

So hopefully that would be the vision of this entire region.

But in terms of organization, clearly we need to envision some type of partnership that brings these organizations together and continues the partnering that we've already been doing through project connect.

Clearly there would be a role for the transit working group, as the mayor said, as an advisory group to campo.

But it would need to have a staff whether through one of the organizations or on its own, to manage the system as it moves forward creating that integrated rail service.

>> I wanted to present one slide on the economic development.

As the mayor indicated we had a number of transit professionals in town in terms of talking about economic development.

You can see some experiences from other places.

Salt lake or phoenix had a seven billion private investment response to about 4 billion rail spending in the phoenix area.

There's an excellent video that captures the highlights from each of those transit experts from other regions on channel 6, but also at [austin urban rail.com](http://austinurbanrail.com).

It only takes three minutes.

It really does capture the highlights.

The salient point is as we look forward in this nation's economies, there will be cities that invest in future investment and there will be those that choose not to.

And increasingly as cities become more congested in the west those that have multiple mobility options for people to travel in and out of central employment will provide opportunities for their economy to continue growth.

So just a summary.

We know that austin has a lot of problems that other cities don't have.

We're the most successful economy, we are busy, we have growth booming throughout the community.

Those are really good problems to have given the economy and the rest of the country is faltering.

Certainly I know this council has been very diligent on making sure that grows in the right direction in terms of not only geographic location, but diversity of economy and so forth for our citizens.

Urban rail like other major infrastructure provides additional capacity for mobility in the future.

That's really what this discussion is about is how do we provide that additional mobility into our primary employment centers in town.

We've presented to you a phased approach starting with the north.

That allows us to manage the south, the water crossing risks, and move forward with that in the subsequent investment or perhaps another investment as the region contemplates priorities.

And it's certainly the proposal we've presented to you provides opportunity to expand as the community might desire.

If you will look in your packet, the next page should be a blue page presenting what I'm not going to present to you, but it gives you more detail on the matrices and a perspective on why specific scores were rated as we looked at not only the mode, but the corridors.

That's my last slide, mayor.

>> Mayor Leffingwell: Thank you.

And I think it's important to keep in mind the message of what we've been dealing with on the group over the past six months is not specifically a downtown rail system, but a regional system.

Not only that covers the entire city of austin, but eventually serves our entire region.

And I think that's very important to -- it's not only important to do, but important to present that message to the public as we go forward.

It's important to get buy-in for one thing.

Just a real quick story.

A couple of weeks ago I was listening to one of the local radio stations and they were beating up on rail pretty good, as they have a tendency to do.

But there was a might who called in and he says, i don't like this -- I don't like this rail system.

What does it do for me?

And so the radio announcer -- the host said, well, where do you live?

He says I live out by south park meadows.

And the guy says it goes to south park meadows.

So that's the kind of mets san jose that we have to continue to present and emphasize, that even though right now today we're talking about a small part, what we're really talking about is a regional system that serves people in every part of this community.

Anything else?

Councilmember riley.

>> Riley: Yep.

Rob, I just want to ask you a question about the -- the handout, the supplemental handout we got which I don't think was part of your presentation.

In looking at that I see that there are -- that there are red lines showing the mokaan corridor and the manor and elgin line that I was talking about previously.

There's also even in -- as early as phase one, there's the solid red line for commuter rail that shows a connection all the way across downtown and appears to connect with the lone star rail corridor on mopac going down to the south.

I just wanted to ask, if we are planning on transitioning the rail line from fourth to third on san antonio and nueces, will the commuter rail vehicles currently in use on capital metro's rail line be able to make that transition?

>> Two points.

The answer is no, it will not be able to the scale of these maps is deceiving and so you really can't see it to scale how those lines come together at the end.

So they're a little bit deceiving there.

As we move forward with user we will certainly look for -- with urban rail we will look for technologies to run along the same corridor, but it is true that current metro rail red lines will not be able to make the transition to third street.

To do that, that technology has to go catty-corner, if you will, across a downtown block because of the turning radius required.

And so the farthest west that technology would be able to get to would be the federal courthouse area, which is where the block between guadalupe and lavaca, which is where a transit center could be.

Could be extended across.

In other words, you could have a transit center there and that could be a transfer over to the red star line.

>> The federal courthouse between san antonio and nueces?

>> Yes.

>> Riley: That's about as far west as that technology could come.

>> As soon as you need to transition to a new street you need to figure out a better way to get across that corridor.

>> Riley: Sue when we see the map, that shouldn't be a solid red line connecting those commuter rail lines.

>> That's where the scale of this graphic is deceiving.

It looks like it's getting all the places, it's just getting to downtown.

>> Riley: If we looked closer --

>> there would be a gap between -- [overlapping speakers]

>> another way to do that, and that is contemplated later in the phasing is perhaps you convert a piece of the red line to a light rail technology that would be more flexible and could meet that -- make that transition.

So it's possible if you change technologies or envision a different way to connect, whether it's cutting across a current downtown block or tunneling or something like that.

>> Riley: Are there light rails technology that could operate on that line?

>> Absolutely.

In fact, the urban rail network has been designed to light rail standards.

So the vehicles are completely interchangeable.

They could do that, yes.

>> And those same vehicles could operate a cap metro's existing red line?

>> Yes.

Now, there's some policy challenges.

You've got to making sure that the far agrees with that, which means long-term you may need to move freight rail off of the central part of the red line corridor, but that's certainly contemplated in the regional plan as it moves forward, i think.

>> Riley: Okay.

Thanks.

>> It's more regulatory issues.

>> Mayor Leffingwell: Councilmember morrison.

>> Morrison: Could I ask what would we expect the next steps to be?

I know the council has a whole has to make a decision, but in terms of timing and all.

>> We've got two more opportunities to discuss rail and in conjunction with the rest of the bond program that is coming forward.

The bond committee.

We have june 26th is a work session dedicated to the bond program and so rail will be a part of that.

August 7th is then the last scheduled work session to discuss both programs.

So you all can consider whether or not to move forward.

And of course I think it's august 16th or the 20th in next few weeks that you would actually call an election.

Karen could probably comment on when that is.

So we have two more work sessions scheduled for the bond proposal that will include rail.

>> Mayor Leffingwell: Okay.

That's it, I guess.

So without objection, we stand adjourned at 11:12 a.m.

Thank you very much.